

**U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Consular Affairs**

Business Travel Procedures

In keeping with the U.S. Government's policy of "secure borders and open doors", effective 1 May 2006 the Consular Section is instituting *expedited visa processing* procedures for business travelers (B1, H, L visas). In order to take advantage of these procedures, business people are now *required* to use the **[Electronic Visa Application Form \(DS-156\) in English](#)**. Handwritten or typed applications will no longer be accepted.

At the time of their application, qualified travelers with properly completed Electronic Visa Application Forms, and all other necessary documentation, will be interviewed immediately. Their visas may be processed within 24 hours, and wherever possible will be issued on the same day.

Click here for more information on **[Visa Application Procedures](#)**.

The Consular Section is committed to facilitating legitimate business travel to the U.S. by making every effort to assign the earliest possible appointment time(s). In particular, the Consular Section makes every effort to accommodate bona fide cases of urgent business or professional travel. Please note that all travelers need to demonstrate their eligibility to receive a U.S. visa, and that it is the traveler's responsibility to make timely arrangements.

1 Priority Scheduling: When the normal visa application schedule allows, appointments will be granted immediately regardless of circumstances. Business travelers (with properly-completed Electronic Visa Application Forms) will enjoy priority in scheduling over all other temporary visitors at all times.

2. Expedited Procedures: Outside the normal application schedule, or when timely appointments are not available, applicants who need to travel urgently or immediately for business or professional reasons must call the Consular Section in order to ask for an expedited appointment.

- a. Applicants must explain their reasons for urgent travel to staff of the Consular Section.
- b. Applicants will be asked to submit documentary evidence, by fax or e-mail, in support of the telephone request (e.g. an invitation letter from the U.S. to an urgent business meeting or unexpected conference).
- c. Based on the circumstances and the documentation submitted, Consular Officers will decide whether and how to expedite visa processing, i.e. schedule an urgent appointment, on a case-by-case basis, in order to ensure timely travel for all bona fide business emergencies.

3. Last-Minute Procedures: Outside the normal appointment schedule, or when timely appointments are not available (i.e. at peak travel times, such as summer or holidays),

**U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Consular Affairs**

"last-minute" requests, caused by poor planning or preparation on the part of the traveler, will *not* be considered as urgent and will *not* be considered for expedited appointments.

Instead, in the interests of fairness to all visa applicants, such requests will be placed on a waiting list in the Consular Section, and will be granted on a first-come, first-served basis as and when prior appointments are cancelled.

However, even last-minute business travelers will be given priority over all other temporary visitor applicants on the waiting list.